PETITION.

To the Honorable Members of the Legislative Assembly of Canada, in Parliament Assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE MONTAGNAIS TRIBE OF INDIANS, INHABITING THE NORTH SHORE OF THE ST. LAWRENCE, OR TERRITORY FORMERLY DESIGNATED BY THE NAME OF THE "KING'S POSTS."

O! you, aged men chosen by your compatriots, We, the Indians of Tadousac, of the *Islets Jeremié*, of the River *Godebou*, and of the Seven Islands, salute you cordially.

This is the first time that we have spoken to you; may our words strike upon your ears and repose softly in your hearts. We are already but too unhappy.—Game is no longer abundant in our forests and waters; and now our territory is taken away from us. But what! does not he who loves his children divide their nourishment equally among them? What have we done then, that we should not be treated as our brothers the Indians of Amont? Each summer they receive presents, since their hunting grounds have been cultivated by strangers.

For a long time the Province has drawn annual revenues from our territory, as well by the establishment of trading posts as by the cutting of timber; and although the extent of our hunting grounds is diminished by cultivation, we have not as yet received any compensation. Thus we are crowded back into the forests. Soon we shall not have even a river to spread our nets. We shall disappear as the sand which the wind carries away, if you do not defend us. We learn that new settlers will soon come to encamp on all our cultivable lands.

It is said that they wish to place us on the land situate between the River Manikuagan and the River *des Outardes*. It is bad land, full of sand and marshes. If you wish that we should be able to exist, we will explain to you what we think.

As there is no land fit for agriculture in the tract below the River *aux Outardes*, let there be reserved to us the extent of land between the River *des Outardes* including both banks, and the River Betseamis, also including both banks.

Let there be left to us the exclusive right of fishing on the Rivers *des Outardes*, Papinachois, Betseamis, the great and little Escoumains, Mistashini, Betsi, and *Romaine*.

Let there be left to us the exclusive right of the seal fishery, in the summer season, in the bays of Kawis, Manikuagan, *des Outardes* and Betseamis; and, for the winter season, at Point *des Monts*, Point *à la Croix*, Point Betseamis, and at *Bon Désir*.

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Let there be given to us for our sole use the possession of the wood fit for building purposes on the Rivers Papinachois and Betseamis, in the reserve petitioned for.

Let those of our people who have taken land elsewhere and made clearances, be maintained in peaceable possession of their respective localities.

And finally let there be given to us indemnities for the lands which the [illegible] our territory, and we shall be satisfied. If nothing is given us, we shall soon be as those who have perished of hunger. But we think too highly of your rightness of heart, to believe that you will reject our demands. If you become our benefactors, we shall thank you much.

RUI PA KA.
PAI BRSTUS.
SPA PATIS ESBIRA,
MI TBER ATBI NI.
RUI MINIK.
ARI PIE NI TI KULU.
} *Chiefs.*

Signed also by 121 Indians.

Done at the River *des Huitres* on the eighth day of the Moon *des Outardes*, 1847.

We the undersigned certify that the translation is faithful.

PIERRE MOREAU, *Interpreter.*
P. T. DUROCHER, *R. O. M. I., Missionary.*
A. M. GAVIN, *P. O. M. I., Missionary.*

(The original petition is in the Montagnais language.)

NOTES OF THE REVEREND P. DUROCHER, *accompanying the Petition of the Montagnais Indians to the Provincial Legislature.*

The Montagnais received the light of the Gospel at the time that Canada was under the domination of the French. They were taught by the Missionaries to read and write; they have since transmitted this branch of science among themselves without the aid of Foreign instructors. They were formerly much addicted to intemperance, but for the last five years all the Indians of this tribe who occupy the shores of the St. Lawrence have strictly observed the rules of total abstinence.

Up to the last year, it was an opinion very generally received in the country, that the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company had an exclusive right to the fisheries on the entire frontier comprised under the names of King's Posts and Seigniory of Mingan. But a contrary opinion having since prevailed, an influx has tended towards the territory of the Montagnais, of settlers hoping to establish themselves with greater rapidity by means of the fisheries. This Indian tribe, perceiving this inundation of settlers on their territory believe it to be a matter of urgent necessity to obtain a reserve for the settlement of a section of their nation. They have chosen the Bay *des Outardes*, where are found united the advantages of hunting and fishing. They ask that this reserve should extend on the shore a

little beyond the Rivers *des Outardes* and *Betseamis*, so as to have the right of making hay on the shore of these rivers and at their embouchures. This reserve is from about four to six leagues in depth. They claim the proprietorship of the wood fit for building purposes on this reserve. It is to be observed that Mr. Price has obtained permission to cut timber on the river *Papinachois*, the mouth of which river is nearly in the middle of the reserve prayed for. This gentleman has caused to be constructed on this river the dam of a mill which he is about erecting. Should he not have made his arrangements with the Agents acting on behalf of the Indians, in place of obtaining permission from the Crown Lands Agent? Might there not be exacted from him an annual rent for the lands occupied by the mill and its dependencies, following therein the example of Messrs. Tremblay & Co., who give yearly the sum of £100 to the Honorable Hudson's Bay Companyf or the lot occupied by a mill and its dependencies in the Seigniory of Portneuf?

It is to be desired that permission should not be granted to cut wood on the River *Betseamis*, so as to prevent as much as possible the Indians from coming into contact with the whites. Such connexions are always fatal to these men of the woods.

It is to be desired that the Indians should have the exclusive right of hunting and fishing on the reserve prayed for. They ask, moreover, for the exclusive right of fishing on the smaller rivers *Betsi*, *Mistaskini*, *Escoumains* and *Romaine*. It must be observed that fishing is also carried on along the sea shore: there it would be left free. The sea fishery requires a somewhat larger outlay. The Honorable Hudson's Bay Company has in fact the exclusive right of fishing on the rivers most abounding in fish viz. *Godebou*, *la Trinité*, the River *Moisie &c.*

These Indians petition that they may be allowed the exclusive right of the seal fishery, during the summer, in the Bays *des Kawis*, *Minikouagan*, *des Outardes* and *Betseamis*, and for the winter, at the Point *des Monts*, at Point *à la Croix*, and at *Bon Désir*. It would then be necessary that there should be granted to them at *Bondésir*, a reserve of ten *arpens* in front, by forty in depth, where they may be able to encamp and cut wood for fuel. It would not be necessary to allow them reserves in other localities for the seal fishery, because it is only at *Bon Désir* that the lands are cultivable. These lands are otherwise wild and uncultivated.

I must call your attention to the fact that in Lower Canada the Micmacks have obtained a reserve at *Isle Verte*, the Hurons at *Lorette*, the Abenaquais at Bécancour, and at Saint *François* on Lake St. Peter, the Iroquois at *Sault St. Louis*, the Algonquins at the Lake of Two Mountains. These Indians receive, besides, presents annually. In Upper Canada the Indians are still better treated.

The shanty establishments on the territory of the petitioners are as follows:— Black River, *Port au Saumon*, *port au Quilles*, *Baie des Rochers*, River *aux Canards*, *Anse à l'eau*, *Moulin Baude*, *Bergeronnes*, *Ecoumains*, Portneuf, *Sault au Cochon*, River *Papinachois*, *anse St. Jean*, Little Saguenay, the Smaller Islands, and the river *St. Marguerite*.

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The following are the names of the places where there are settlers: the river *aux Canards*, Point *à Bouleau*, *Anse St. Jean*, River *Ste Marguerite*, *Moulin Baude*, the *Bergeronnes*, *Bon Désir*, and Escoumains.

Might there not be given to these Indians a certain part of the revenues accruing from the sale of the lands and the cutting of timber?

There are ten or twelve Montagnais established in the Bay of *Milles Vaches*. They petition to have their lands preserved to them without payment of the legal dues.

Mr. George Duberger wished that there should be reserved for the *Montagnais* the land situate between the River *Manikuagan* and the River *des Outardes*, but it is in no wise fit for agriculture.

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